



*Because Every Child
Deserves Every Chance*

Community Schools for All

A Case Statement and Strategic Plan | 2007-2014

VISION

The Coalition for Community Schools believes that strong communities require strong schools and strong schools require strong communities. We envision a future in which schools are centers of thriving communities where everyone belongs, works together, and succeeds.

MISSION

The Coalition advances opportunities for the success of children, families and communities by promoting the development of more, and more effective, community schools.

CORE VALUES

Community Schools...
*Foster strong partnerships
Share accountability for results
Set high expectations for all
Build on the community's strengths
Embrace diversity*

Coalition for Community Schools

Community Schools for All
A Case Statement and Strategic Plan | 2007-2014



Created by the Partners of the Coalition for
Community Schools

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The Coalition for Community Schools is staffed by
the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL).

Since 1964, IEL has been at the heart of an
impartial, dynamic, nationwide network of people
and organizations from many walks of life who
share a passionate conviction that excellent
education is critical to nurturing healthy
individuals, families, and communities.



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Coalition for Community Schools

In the past decade, the Coalition for Community Schools has grown from seven partners to more than 150. Through our partners, we have promoted the development of community schools across the country. Our success in increasing the visibility of community schools among policymakers and the growth of community schools nationally led us to want to think anew about our work – and seek new and bolder ways to pursue our vision.

In May of 2007, leaders from national organizations and local communities crowded into a room at the Academy of Educational Development to think about the future. The energy that surrounded the meeting was palpable. It was the culmination of a year long process that involved hundreds of leaders from sixty different national organizations, local communities, and foundations through focus groups, meetings and surveys. Throughout the process, Coalition partners renewed their commitment to deepen their organizations' dedication to community schools. Local advocates expressed the urgent need for more support and information. The need for the Coalition to continue and scale up its work was clear.

This strategic plan reflects the work and excitement that this group generated. It represents their collective best thinking about the growth of community schools and the opportunities that exist to move our ideas forward in local communities and on the national stage. Emerging out of this process, the Coalition and its partners have established three results that we will commit all of our energy and resources to achieving:

- ➲ Sustain and strengthen existing community school initiatives
- ➲ Grow new community school initiatives
- ➲ Increase the number of schools that identify as, or become, community schools.

We will achieve these results through five specific strategies:

- ➲ Foster Local Action
- ➲ Build Capacity of Local Leaders and Communities
- ➲ Create a Supportive Policy Environment
- ➲ Demonstrate the Effectiveness of Community Schools
- ➲ Develop a Stronger Communications Plan

Achieving these results will mean that more, and more effective, community schools are ensuring that young people, families and communities succeed.

WORKING WITH OUR PARTNERS, WE WILL COMMIT ALL OF OUR ENERGY AND RESOURCES TO CREATING MORE, AND MORE EFFECTIVE, COMMUNITY SCHOOLS.

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George Washington Community

School

is alive with activity and its students are thriving. However, this wasn't always the case for this Indianapolis high school that serves a largely minority and low income population. It was once an academically failing school that was closed by the district because of its poor reputation. The community pushed to reopen the school as a community school, envisioning a center of community collectively focused in improving graduation rates and preparing young people for post-secondary education.

When the school reopened as a community school, its strong ties to the community inspired innovative teaching strategies that involved the community. Teachers use the state's learning standards and have added civic and community involvement components to them. On any given day at George Washington you might see students engaged in letter writing campaigns, reading to kindergarteners, teaching their teachers Spanish or working out with college students in personal fitness training, while parents might participate in a financial literacy class, English as a Second Language or work on their GED.

Nearly six years after becoming a community school, standardized test scores have risen by an annual average of 10 to 15 percentage points and sophomores, tested for the first time in 2003, outscored all of the district's traditional high schools. Although the college going rate is just 5 percent for adults in the surrounding community, 83 percent of George Washington's graduates go on to some form of post-secondary education.

James John Elementary School

was once one of the lower performing schools in the Portland, Oregon school district. A transformation started in 2000 when James John became a community school. Before James John was a community school, there were not many resources to keep students engaged, accelerate their academic growth or enrich the school day.

Today, students have been given another option – a different place to go. Now, over a dozen different community organizations and agencies come together at James John to support students and engage families. The school offers parent and adult education classes, including English as a second language for Spanish and Hmong speakers, financial literacy and nutrition education. Students engage in real world learning and the curriculum focuses on building awareness of the community. The school day has been extended with out-of-school time providers whose rich offerings are now aligned with the curriculum. And it works. Students at James John have met AYP for four years running.

James John is not unique. It is one of 55 community schools in Portland and Multnomah County, all bringing a wide array of resources together to focus on student success.

COMMUNITY
SCHOOLS –

BECAUSE
EVERY CHILD
DESERVES
EVERY
CHANCE

A CASE
STATEMENT

A CASE STATEMENT

Education for all is a powerful social contract, one that requires us to find a way to give every child every chance to succeed.

Our nation's future relies on schools like James John to produce young people who are prepared to compete and participate as productive members of our democracy in the 21st century. In too many places, large numbers of young people, particularly low-income and minority children, are not developing the knowledge and skills they need to succeed. Dropout rates approach 50 percent in many urban school districts, and for those still in school, we not only find that their literacy and numeracy skills are not up to par, but that they are also not developing the learning, thinking, and life skills that are necessary to succeed in our changing economy and changing world.

Giving Every Child Every Chance

Community schools are both places and partnerships that bring together the school and community to provide an engaging academic experience, enriched opportunities to help students see positive futures, and services designed to remove barriers to learning. Students engage in real-world problem solving as part of their curriculum. Community schools involve families in the school community and organize the wealth of assets that all communities have to focus on our youth and strengthen our families and communities. Schools become centers of the community and are open to everyone – all day, every day.

In a community school, the school and its partners create conditions for learning that lead to results...

- ➲ Early childhood development opportunities are available ... *so that children are ready to enter school.*
- ➲ There is a core instructional program with qualified teachers, a challenging curriculum, and high standards and expectations... *so that young people succeed academically.*
- ➲ Learning bridges the gap between life and academics – in school, afterschool and out of school – *so that students are engaged and motivated to learn, and involved in their community.*
- ➲ The basic physical, social, emotional, and economic needs of young people and their families are met...*so that students live, learn and thrive in stable and supportive environments.*
- ➲ There is mutual respect and effective collaboration between families and school staff...*so that families are actively involved in their children's education.*
- ➲ The school and the community work together to find solutions...*so that communities are desirable places to live.*

Community schools create these conditions, and, in the process, increase the social capital available to students, their families and community members. Students begin the lifelong process of becoming citizens of a democracy.

Whether at the elementary, middle or high school level, community schools open their doors to broader horizons, creating partnerships with community-based organizations like YMCAs, Boys and Girls Clubs, child and family service agencies and institutions of higher education. They engage parents and other residents in the life of the school. The needs of students at different levels of schooling vary; but the assets of community are available to respond at every level.

Do They Really Work?

Research shows that it takes more than English and math for children to grow into educated, responsible adults. Non-school factors such as adequate nutrition, active parent participation in their child's education, and student mobility greatly influence students' academic achievement¹. Community schools bring the resources of the community into the school to make sure that young people have everything they need to thrive and succeed.

Evidence is mounting that students in community schools not only improve academically, but that other factors important to student success also improve. In our report, [Making the Difference: Research and Practice in Community Schools](#)², the Coalition found improvement in academic, family, school and community outcomes. Recent data from school systems using community schools as a core improvement strategy show equally positive trends. Communities In Schools (CIS), a community school model, offers evidence that students who participate in CIS programs are more likely to be

¹ Barton, P. (2003). Parsing the Achievement Gap. Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service. Henderson, A. T., & Mapp, K. L. (2002). A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement. Austin, TX: National Center for Family & Community Connections with Schools.

² Blank, M., Melaville, A., & Shah, B. (2003). Making the Difference. Washington, D.C.: The Coalition for Community Schools.

promoted to the next grade, graduate from high school and attend a post-secondary institution³. Efforts are underway to develop more comprehensive assessments and evaluations of community schools.

A Growing Movement

Community schools are becoming one of the key strategies that community and school leaders employ to improve student success. Arne Duncan, the CEO of Chicago Public Schools has committed to making every Chicago school a community school. He is, “absolutely convinced that families that work together and learn together and see the schools as the focus of their community life are going to do better.” Chicago has been able to sustain the largest community schools initiative in the nation, with an average of 15,000 students and families being served each year. This deep and unwavering belief that we must all take responsibility for improving the lives of young people is emerging in communities large and small across the country.

From Chicago’s 110 community schools to Portland, OR where 55 of 150 schools are community schools to the outskirts of Seattle where the 2,640 students of the Tukwila, Washington school district all attend community schools, the number of district-wide initiatives has rapidly expanded in the last ten years. These communities are learning from various national models that helped found the Coalition (Children’s Aid Society, Community Education, Communities In Schools, Beacons, Schools of the 21st Century, University-Assisted Community Schools) and from each other. Building on the commitment to quality afterschool opportunities, comprehensive early childhood education, real-world learning approaches, and health and mental health services, community schools have garnered support as a strategy to permanently root and nurture a new approach to learning – one that builds a bridge between schools, families and communities.

Comprehensive community school initiatives are moving to scale in other places like Lincoln, NE; Tulsa, OK; Baltimore, MD; Evansville, IN; Montgomery County, MD; and Multnomah County (Portland, OR) among others. Each of these places has multiple community schools, a cross-sector leadership team and a sustainability plan in place. States such as Illinois, Pennsylvania, Oregon and New York are looking at the work in these places and developing state-wide community school strategies.

In Independence, Missouri buildings are being used beyond the school day regularly. Evening and weekend access allows buildings to become community centers during nonschool hours. Volunteers within the schools, from mentors to boosters, improve the quality of education by increasing services to students during, before and afterschool and connecting the broader community to the lives of children. The effort is clearly paying off. Students involved in the extended program in Independence show improvement in almost every measurable area: self-reliance, homework completion, attendance, academic achievement, and more.

In Multnomah County, Oregon the community school movement expanded rapidly from eight pilot Schools Uniting Neighborhoods (SUN) schools to 55 (of 150) schools across eight districts. Students who participate in the SUN initiative have shown strong gains in academics: 70 percent of regular participants had increased state benchmark scores in reading and 71 percent had increased state benchmark scores in math. Other factors important to academic success, such as attendance and classroom behavior, also show gains. Today, there is a great deal of interest in creating state policy in Oregon that would support a state-wide community school initiative.

In Tukwila, WA, where all of the schools are community schools, absentee and drop-out rates have decreased for middle and high school students and the on-time graduation rate increased. For families participating in community school programs, the mobility rate is 5 percent compared with the district average of 23 percent. Reading, math and writing scores for middle school and high school students are well above neighboring districts. Now, the neighboring communities of SeaTac and Seattle are considering replicating this work.

In Chicago’s 110 community schools, over 70% have shown academic gains in reading. On the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT), the state standardized assessment, over 76% of students in community schools demonstrated significant gains. As student achievement has risen in these schools, the district has repeatedly emphasized its commitment to the idea and vision of community schools.

(Profiles of more community schools may be found at www.communityschools.org).

³ Addressing America’s Dropout Crisis One Child at a Time: 2005-2006 Results from the CIS Network

A CASE STATEMENT

All of these places know that there is no single solution to improving public education. They have discovered instead that preparing young people for life in the 21st century requires forging collaborative relationships where communities, schools and families reach across boundaries that once divided them to speak and act with one voice.

A Rising Tide of Support

Local and national leaders are turning their attention to what it takes to address all of the developmental dimensions of young people – social, emotional, physical, cognitive, civic, moral, and academic. We know that the development of these interconnected domains is fostered in safe environments that provide varied and rich social experiences; offer educational opportunities built on children's learning styles and the world they live in, and support the basic needs of children and their families⁴. There is now increasing discussion about educating the whole child. A new report by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development's Commission on the Whole Child promotes the development of children who are healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged, and was based in part on a paper prepared by the Coalition⁵.

Attracted to both the common sense logic of and the building momentum around community schools, major national organizations such as The National Education Association are including community schools as a priority in their strategic plans. America's Promise Alliance has adopted the ideas of schools as hubs, or community schools, as one of three national action strategies to improve the lives of all young people. We are working closely America's Promise to help them develop a national strategy to reach 15 million at-risk youth in the next five years. The President of Communities In Schools, and a member of the Coalition's steering committee, is chairing the working group leading this effort.

The common work of local and national leaders and organizations reflects a changing public sentiment. Public Agenda, a national opinion research organization, explored what the public really thinks about No Child Left Behind and reported in their 2006 Reality Check, "the strong focus on standards and testing is beginning to strike much of the public as a Johnny one-note approach..."

Community schools are a strong response to this emerging vision of what children need to succeed. Policymakers and the public are recognizing the importance of wrapping supports around young people wherever they are. Afterschool, quality early childhood education and health and mental health services are increasingly recognized as crucial components of a comprehensive approach to helping all young people succeed. More and more, community schools are seen as a way to permanently root these components in schools.

This environment has led to significant support for community schools at the national level. House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-MD), Senator Ben Nelson (D-NE), and Senator Edward Kennedy (D-MA) have each introduced legislation to support community schools.

Taking Bold Steps

The time is ripe for an intensive effort to make community schools a permanent part of the education and community landscape. From a group of dedicated initiating partners in 1997, the Coalition for Community Schools has grown to more than 150 organizations. It is the only national group with partners from the education, youth development, health and mental health, afterschool, community development and higher education arenas, as well as states and localities, working to promote community schools. It is poised to move community schools from a promising practice to a mainstream model for how schools will operate in the 21st century.

⁴ Urdan, T. & Klein, S. (1998). Early Adolescence: A Review of the Literature. *Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education Office of Educational Research and Improvement*, 10. [Prepared paper].

Benard, B. (1991). *Fostering Resiliency in Kids: Protective Factors in the Family, School, and Community*. Portland, OR: Western Center for Drug-Free Schools and Communities. [Retrieved from the ERIC database (ERIC # ED 335 781)]. McLaughlin, M. (2000). *Community Counts: How Youth Organizations Matter for Youth Development*. Washington D.C.: Public Education Network.

⁵ Blank, M. & Berg, A. (2006). *All Together Now: Sharing Responsibility for the Whole Child*. Alexandria, VA: Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development.

A CASE STATEMENT

Over the past ten years, the Coalition has helped catalyze and support the increasing number of community school initiatives. We have built a strong national network of partners committed to promoting the community schools vision and strategy, and, working with these partners we have focused national attention on community schools.

The Coalition for Community Schools has...

- ➲ Turned the attention of key policymakers to community schools resulting in the introduction of national legislation such as the Full-Service Community Schools Act.
- ➲ Disseminated research and information through publications such as Making the Difference: Research and Practice in Community Schools and the publications by key leaders and organizations including Joy Dryfoos, the Children's Aid Society and the Center for Community Partnerships at the University of Pennsylvania and others.
- ➲ Informed and influenced practice through publications such as Community-Based Learning: Engaging Students for Success and Citizenship and Growing Community Schools: the Role of Cross-Boundary Leadership as well as our website and newsletter.
- ➲ Increased the capacity of school leaders and communities through peer learning, conferences, presentations, articles in journals and newsletter and issuance of the publication of Community and Family, Engagement: Principals Share what Works.
- ➲ Fostered peer learning among community school leaders to improve quality and foster innovation through well-attended conferences, partner meetings, and our Urban Community Schools Affinity Group.

Now the work of the Coalition for Community Schools is to permanently embed the policies and practices that define and support community schools at the local, state and federal levels, and to help grow local initiatives to scale. It is a challenge that calls for creativity, ambition, and ever deeper partnerships. We need to increase capacity on the ground and build sustainable community schools initiatives. Our greatest resources for achieving these goals are our partners and the local communities where there is substantial community school activity. As we plan our future, we intend to build on the accomplishments of our past by focusing our energy on five key strategies that will result in more, and more effective, community schools. These strategies are...

- ➲ Foster Local Action
- ➲ Build Capacity of Local Leaders and Communities
- ➲ Create a Supportive Policy Environment
- ➲ Demonstrate the Effectiveness of Community Schools
- ➲ Develop a Stronger Communications Plan

Building on the commitment to quality after school, comprehensive early childhood education, and health and mental health community schools have garnered support as a strategy to permanently root and nurture a new approach to learning – one that builds a bridge between schools, families and communities.

It is time for all of us to stand up and say our children need more. They deserve every chance to succeed. They deserve community schools. The goal we seek through this strategic plan is to dramatically increase the number and effectiveness of community schools by 2014 – leading to better results for students, families and communities.

More, and More Effective, Community Schools

A Plan for Action

2007-2014

More, and More Effective, Community Schools

As we begin the next seven years of the Coalition's work, it is clear that community schools are gaining traction. They are embraced by an increasing number of school districts and communities as a way to harness community resources in service to student success. But, despite this significant growth, we have found that community schools are talked about, but often not fully understood, and if understood, often seen as complex to implement. Our work is to anchor community schools as a mainstream strategy, broadly implemented across the country. This requires that the Coalition and its partners work strategically to deepen the understanding of and support for community schools and to demystify implementation. Two important strengths provide us with a strong foundation for our future work:

NATIONALLY, more partners have stepped up their commitment to a community school agenda. Policy papers, magazine articles, member communications, and strategic plans increasingly emphasize a community schools approach. Often directly due to the work of the Coalition, these increased commitments provide a stronger platform from which to accelerate the growth of the community school movement. We have deepened these relationships through our strategic planning process and have opened up new opportunities for mutual action.

ON THE GROUND, a number of school districts, many of whom are known for their emerging success in urban school reform, have developed and implemented a systemic community school strategy. Eighteen school districts with multiple community schools are part of the Coalition's growing Urban Affinity Group. These districts all have organized groups of school and community leaders who are committed to the strategy and believe that community schools are the key to improving student achievement and student success. These districts are building diverse alliances in their

communities, and are beginning a bottom up effort to drive a state and federal policy agenda. Leaders in these communities are central to achieving our goals.

In other places, community schools exist not as a district-wide strategy, but as "boutiques" – single schools operating within a district, often without central office support. Still others have many of the programmatic elements of a community school (afterschool, parent involvement, college access programs, adult education, etc.) but have not yet moved to a comprehensive community school strategy.

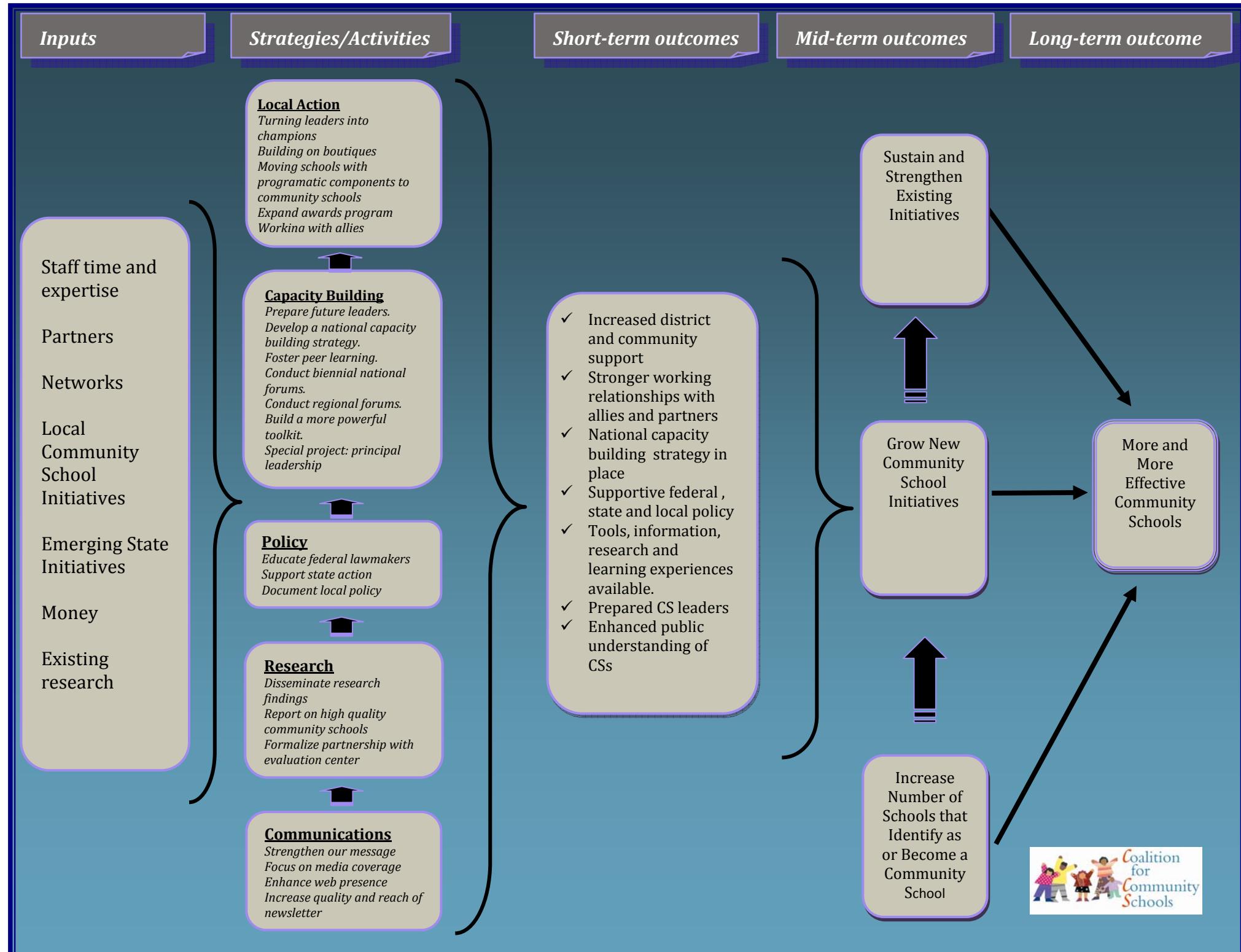
Over the next seven years, the Coalition for Community Schools will build on this capacity to achieve our goal: Creating more, and more effective, community schools. We will measure our progress toward this goal by focusing on communities and community schools that are in different stages of development. The chart below outlines the results we plan to achieve in the next seven years and the benchmarks we will use to measure our progress. **We propose five major strategies to achieve these results:**

- ⌚ Foster Local Action
- ⌚ Build Capacity of Local Leaders and Communities
- ⌚ Create a Supportive Policy Environment
- ⌚ Demonstrate the Effectiveness of Community Schools
- ⌚ Develop a Stronger Communications Plan

As they have in the past, our partners will play a crucial role as we move to implement the elements of this plan. Each strategy will be driven by an action team made up of key Coalition partners. These action teams will guide the work and hold the Coalition accountable for results. Working with our partners, we will ensure that every child has every chance.

Results	Benchmarks
Sustain and strengthen community school initiatives	Existing systemic efforts grow to 50% of schools in local districts by 2011 and 80% by 2014.
Grow new community school initiatives	Double the number of large urban districts (districts with more than 25,000 students) with a community school strategy from 10 to 20 by 2011 and double it again to 40 by 2014. Foster the development of community school strategies in an additional 25 districts (rural, small urban, suburban) by 2011 and 50 by 2014. Move 20 communities with one or two community schools to a communitywide strategy by 2011 and double the number again to 40 by 2014.
Increase the number of individual schools that identify as or become a community school	300 more schools explicitly describe themselves as community schools by 2011 and 500 more do so by 2014.

In the next several pages, we sketch out the strategies that we will use to pursue these results. Each strategy includes the opportunities that exist in the current environment that will help to fuel our progress, activities that we will engage in to achieve the results we seek, details on how we will measure our progress, and specific products that we will develop. The logic model on the next page provides a visual representation of our strategic plan.



STRATEGY: FUEL LOCAL ACTION

Current Environment

The number of communities and school districts organizing a comprehensive community school initiative at scale is growing; however, many places have only one or two 'boutique' community schools. At the same time, many schools and districts are beginning to embrace components of community schools (afterschool programs, civic engagement, health and mental health and family support) but have not yet integrated their programs and services into a comprehensive strategy and they are unaware of the national community schools movement. Experience shows that when local leaders make community schools a district-wide strategy – and work to sustain and strengthen the work - the value of organizing the community's work around schools rises.

Local leaders pursuing a district-wide strategy have indicated a strong willingness to act on behalf of community schools and the Coalition's vision. Our partners tell us that the voices and the experience of local leaders are most likely to influence their peers to support community schools.

Coalition Action

TURNING LOCAL AND STATE LEADERS INTO CHAMPIONS. We have close relationships with key players in a number of communities who have proven pivotal to the development of community schools. Allies like Arne Duncan have agreed to help convene a group of superintendents from large urban school systems working on or interested in community schools. Chief State Schools Officers including Susan Castillo (OR) and Nancy Grasmick (MD) have indicated strong support as well. Leaders in smaller school districts and other key local institutions can play similar roles. We will organize these critical allies into cadres and facilitate their speaking at state and national meetings, writing articles and op-eds and connecting with the media. Case statements geared to the concerns of their particular constituencies will support this effort. We will provide champions with talking points, research updates and success that highlight the performance of community schools at all levels. Partners at the appropriate national association will help guide this strategy and help to develop co-branded tools, and facilitate dissemination to their leaders.

BUILDING ON BOUTIQUES. The Coalition will build on the effectiveness of 'boutiques' to develop community-wide strategies. We will work with the leaders of identified schools, with leaders of other schools as they are discovered, as well as the leaders of their districts and communities, to develop a system-wide strategy. Working with and in places that demonstrate the interest and potential to expand, we will develop tools that detail how to 'build-out,' connect them to similar communities with

broader strategies and offer peer learning opportunities, via the web and at regional and national events.

MOVING SCHOOLS WITH PROGRAMATIC COMPONENTS TO COMMUNITY SCHOOLS. If we could make every school with the characteristics of a community schools – or schools getting close – a part of the movement, we would go a long way toward raising the visibility of our vision. We will enhance the work of these schools by connecting them to peer networks and valuable information. We intend to use all of our tools - website, newsletter, national awards program, and public outreach - to identify these schools and help them to move from an individual community school to a community-wide strategy.

EXPAND AWARDS PROGRAM. Our Community Schools National Awards for Excellence has proven to be both a way to learn about and honor community schools, and a way to find schools that are acting as a community school but are not connected to a national network. To increase the visibility of our awards program, we plan to seek a sponsor to underwrite a monetary award for the winners. This would make the application process more attractive and leverage media attention.

WORKING WITH ALLIES. The Coalition will work even more intentionally with partners who are pursuing strategies that are integral to the community schools vision such as social and emotional learning, early childhood development, afterschool, service learning, and 21st century skills. Our intent is to develop specific action plans to promote community schools and their vision simultaneously. We will continue to use the Coalition's convening capacity to bring together these and other partners on cross-cutting issues.

Measuring Progress...

- ➊ 100 local and state leaders advocating community schools by 2011 and 200 by 2014.
- ➋ Increase in number and intensity of partners actively promoting community schools.
- ➌ Increase in local media coverage of community schools.

Products

- ➊ Case statements geared to the concerns of their particular constituencies
- ➋ Tools for champions including talking points and research updates
- ➌ Tools for boutiques to help them "build out"
- ➍ Community Schools National Awards for Excellence booklet that highlights the work of local initiatives and individual community schools.

STRATEGY: BUILD CAPACITY OF LOCAL LEADERS AND COMMUNITIES

Opportunities

Experience in the past decade makes very clear that implementing a successful community schools strategy is a demanding task, requiring not only an understanding of community schools but the ability to navigate issues inside schools and school districts, and across the boundaries that separate schools, local government, community-based organizations, and other key institutions. It demands leaders who can bring together people and do both the political and the technical work necessary to create change. It requires a comprehensive capacity building strategy.

Participants in the strategic planning process made it clear that building capacity and leadership had to become an explicit strategy of the Coalition. The potential for national legislation and funding that would support community schools makes our capacity building challenge even more crucial. While the technical assistance and training capacity within the community school field is significant, it is not sufficient to meet the demand we expect to generate. Key Coalition partners, including The Children's Aid Society National Technical Assistance Center is a key resource as is the expertise of Communities In Schools, the National Community Education Association, the Youth Development Institute of the Fund for the City of New York and the Center for Community Partnerships at the University of Pennsylvania, have TA capacities. We will complement these national resources with the expertise of local people doing the work. We have access to many such individuals and systems through our Urban Community Schools Affinity Group and broadening networks.

Coalition Action

PREPARE FUTURE LEADERS. Our strategic planning has identified a rising number of young people with the ability to sustain the momentum deep into the future. To nurture these leaders, the Coalition will establish the National Community Schools Leadership Initiative. It will prepare a cohort of new leaders for the field annually, network these leaders, and support them as they move forward in their careers.

DEVELOP A NATIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING STRATEGY. The Coalition has already begun working with national partners who offer TA to develop a long-term national capacity strategy. With these partners, we will build an expanded TA system that can meet a growing demand. This might include the development of a national faculty; or cost-effective delivery strategies such as web-based training, peer learning; and identifying measures of effectiveness. This group will guide the development of other capacity building activities that the Coalition undertakes.

FOSTER PEER LEARNING. Peer learning is a vital and cost-effective capacity building strategy. We have nurtured peer learning by connecting people to one another via telephone, national meetings, and by organizing the Urban Community Schools Affinity Group – a network of systemic community school

initiatives. We will continue to deepen these peer learning efforts in person, through conference calls and on the web. Web-based seminars will enable us to reach people with varying stages of knowledge about community schools development. Faculty would be drawn from national partners and local leaders.

CONDUCT BIENNIAL NATIONAL FORUMS. Our national forums have proven to be a vital asset for building the community schools movement. Events have grown from 150 in 1998 to an average of 800 the past two years; we anticipate 1,000 in spring 2008 in Portland. Forums are always held in places with strong community schools initiatives, so people can see successful and effective local work. We can directly attribute major work in Tulsa, Peoria and Baltimore and other places to the participation of large teams at our national forum.

CONDUCT REGIONAL FORUMS. We will initiate regional forums in alternative years to the national event. Regional forums will be held at sites that the Coalition considers 'Centers of Community School Excellence.' Lincoln Nebraska, one of the first winners of the Community Schools National Awards for Excellence, has agreed to host the first such event in the spring of 2009. It will provide participants with an in-depth look at why and how Lincoln's leaders have made the Lincoln Community Learning Centers Initiative successful.

SPECIAL PROJECT: PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP The Coalition, together with the Elementary and Secondary Principal Organizations, issued a well-received publication offering advice from principals who run community schools. We are now working with leaders of principal preparation and professional development programs to develop a toolkit of resources for preparing principals to work with communities. Working with our capacity building work group it is our intent is to turn these tools into curriculum and workshops for principals and to expand this work to meet the needs of superintendents.

Measuring Progress...

- ➊ Participation in Coalition forums increases by 25 percent per event from an average of 800 in 2005 and 2006.
- ➋ Teams from 25 communities participate in 1st regional forum
- ➌ Number of regional forums expands to 3 annually.
- ➍ Conduct 6-8 webinars annually with a total of 800 participants.
- ➎ Double the number of individual visitors to the Coalition website from 198,000 (2006) by 2011 and increase to 600,000 by 2014.

Products

- ➊ Cohorts of 30 CS leaders annually beginning in 2010
- ➋ National capacity building strategy
- ➌ Peer learning networks
- ➍ Curriculum and workshops for principals
- ➎ Tools to help local communities build capacity

STRATEGY: CREATE A SUPPORTIVE POLICY ENVIRONMENT

Opportunities

Ratcheting up the number of community schools significantly requires a far more supportive policy environment. In order to strengthen the sustainability of district-wide community schools initiatives and foster the emergence and development of community school strategies in districts with “boutiques” and programmatic elements, policy and financing at all levels – federal, state and local – must recognize the importance of integrating the emphasis on student achievement with a broader focus on factors that affect student success. The boundaries of the categorical system must become more permeable and there must be financial incentives for schools and communities to create a framework of services, supports, and opportunities on behalf of their students. Local leaders should not have to fight uphill to organize community schools; good policy will make it easier and simpler.

At the federal level, House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer has introduced the Full Service Community Schools Act; Senator Ben Nelson (NE) has introduced a companion bill in the Senate. Senator Edward Kennedy has introduced the Keeping Parents and Community Engaged Act that would also help support the development of community schools. A group of Coalition partners is working to inform provisions of NCLB to provide stronger expectations for community involvement and lay the ground work for more community schools.

Several state policy efforts are emerging that need support. Local policies are now being developed as well. Since community schools are inherently local institutions capturing those policies is crucial to helping other local leaders see how to move forward.

Coalition Action

EDUCATE FEDERAL POLICY MAKERS. During the seven year period of this strategic plan, we expect No Child Left Behind to be reauthorized twice. The Coalition has been mobilizing its partners to ensure that federal lawmakers and administrators know how community schools support the goals of NCLB. As community schools expand across the country, the Coalition expects to have a growing network of strong, local voices that can educate members of Congress.

Our policy work will extend beyond NCLB. We must also be sure that policymakers are aware of how other federal programs (e.g., health, juvenile justice, work force development) can be more effective when integrated into a community schools framework.

We have a policy group of national partners in place that is making significant progress for these purposes. We plan to do more to ensure that policymakers and their staffs know about community schools and have the information they need to craft supportive legislation.

SUPPORT STATE ACTION. The time is ripe to focus on state policy work. Community school advocates in Illinois, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania and Maryland are pursuing state policy strategies (e.g., the Illinois Federation for Community Schools, the Oregon Commission on Children, Youth and Families with a small state appropriation for community schools). During the strategic planning process leaders from states with emerging policy efforts asked the Coalition to bring them together to share knowledge and experience, to bring other state policy experts to their work, and to develop approaches to engage leaders from related fields (e.g., afterschool, violence prevention). The Coalition will produce an annual state policy brief based on this work and also assist by develop model legislation and guidelines.

DOCUMENT AND SHARE LOCAL POLICY FRAMEWORKS. Local communities that have broad and deep community school strategies are the cauldron for the development of local policy options. Many of these communities are involved with our Urban Community Schools Affinity Group. Our intent is to capture these local policies, and build a local policy guide to community schools. That guide will be issued and regularly updated on the Coalition website.

SPECIAL PROJECT: The federal categorical system remains a major barrier to community schools moving into the mainstream. Breaking down these barriers has proven to be a daunting task over many years. We propose to convene a group of partners, policy analysts and Capitol Hill staff with relevant experience to take a look at this issue and propose a 21st century solution. With a new administration in Washington in 2009, we think there may be greater receptivity. The group will create a brief to educate lawmakers and administrators of federal agencies about how to address these barriers.

Measuring Progress...

- ⇒ Provisions supporting community school development are included in a reauthorized NCLB
- ⇒ Federal funds are appropriated for community schools.
- ⇒ Provisions supporting community school development are included in other federal legislation.
- ⇒ Six states have policies that support community schools by 2011 and 12 states by 2014.

Products

- ⇒ Model legislation at the local and state level
- ⇒ Annual state policy briefs
- ⇒ Repository of local policy frameworks on the Coalition's website
- ⇒ Brief for policymakers on how to address federal categorical funding

STRATEGY: DEMONSTRATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Opportunities

We know that a research and evaluation agenda is a necessary next step for the community schools' movement. We need to both demonstrate the effectiveness of community schools through empirical research and case studies, and get research and tools into the hands of policymakers, advocates and practitioners. At the Coalition's 2006 National Forum in Baltimore, Dr. James Comer said, "we need to pull all the evidence together and present it in a way that is indisputable – that makes it impossible to argue that poor kids can't learn." The Coalition began to do this with the publication of Making the Difference: Research and Practice in Community Schools in 2003. Now we must go further.

The community schools field has developed to a point where there are a number of sustainable initiatives that are collecting evaluation data and demonstrating strong results. A third party study of these initiatives will capture their experience on the ground and look at their impact. During the strategic planning process, our partners made it clear that they wanted the Coalition to work with an established research university or center to develop a proposal to evaluate the effectiveness of community schools. The design would include the provision for local sites to contribute data to a stronger research base for community schools in general. Additionally, the growing number of community schools, based on different approaches, e.g., university-assisted community schools, community school at the high school level, offers a rich base for understanding how community schools work.

Coalition Action

FORMALIZE PARTNERSHIP WITH EVALUATION CENTER. Milbrey McLaughlin, Executive Director of the John Gardner Center for Youth and Their Communities, a highly respected academician involved with community schools in San Mateo County, and, with youth and community issues, has agreed to work with the Coalition to develop a research design for such a study, and to pursue funding. We intend to involve experienced evaluators in other local communities in helping to think through the evaluation design, and build a network of evaluators who can contribute to the field.

IDENTIFY AND REPORT ON HIGH QUALITY COMMUNITY SCHOOLS. The Coalition will work with its partners and allies, including the National High School Alliance, the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) and the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) to identify high-performing community schools and produce documents or on-line publications highlighting the work of these schools, and describing what "sets them apart."

DISSEMINATE RESEARCH FINDINGS. The Coalition will disseminate the research based on local community schools studies as well as reports from related fields. We will create research briefs for key policymakers to help them make the argument that community schools not only make sense, they also produce results.

Measuring Progress...

- ➲ Working with the John Gardner Center, secure funding for an evaluation by the end of 2008.
- ➲ Complete third party evaluation of community schools by 2011, and follow up study by 2014.

Products

- ➲ Experimental design protocol to measure the effectiveness of community schools
- ➲ Publications on high quality community schools
- ➲ Research briefs targeted for specific audiences
- ➲ Comprehensive report on research findings

STRATEGY: DEVELOP A STRONGER COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Opportunities

Raising awareness of the importance of community schools undergirds all of the Coalition's future work. The public, policy makers, practitioners and other key stakeholders must be made aware of the vision and effectiveness of a community school and become advocates for the idea in their local community. Greater awareness and easily accessible tools and information will lead to more community schools in more places.

Coalition Action

STRENGTHEN OUR MESSAGE. We have a good message but it must be sharper and more powerful. We have started to rethink our messaging by developing a new vision, mission and tagline, as well as talking points and positioning statements. Our intent is to build a message platform that frames community schools in terms of values that emerged from our strategic planning.

- ➲ To Belong: From children to teachers, from parents to residents, everyone needs to belong in order to learn, grow and contribute positively to the community.
- ➲ To Work Together: Community Schools bring an innovative and collaborative approach that encourages children, families and the entire community to work together and find solutions
- ➲ To Succeed: Community schools build bridges across linking schools, communities and families to strengthen young people's opportunity for success.

We will continue to work on developing our message and engage a communications consultant to help us craft a robust strategic communications plan. We will also develop a communications toolkit to help local and state leaders make the case for community schools.

FOCUS ON MEDIA COVERAGE. Through our relationships with our partners, we have had some success getting community schools "in the news". Coverage has included an article in a paid advertising section of the Washington Post sponsored by the National Education Association, a special edition of PTA's national magazine devoted entirely to community schools, an article in Education Leadership, and an upcoming feature in Principals Magazine, published by the National Association of Secondary Principals. The Coalition has also had letters to the editor published in the New York Times and the Washington Post and a commentary published in EdWeek. Based on our successes, we plan to approach additional partners whose organizations produce print magazines. We also will expand our reach by working with local communities to help them place articles and opeds in

their local papers, and get attention from local television and radio stations.

ENHANCE OUR WEB PRESENCE. Our website has served us well over the years, but the field needs a more useful, and user friendly, tool. We have partners who are willing to provide server capacity that will allow us to upload pictures and videos to our site. We plan to build a map, pinpointing community school award winners and provide a virtual community school tour on the web site. This resource is particularly important for policymakers and other influential leaders who cannot visit a school in person. In addition, we will also reorganize our website to make it easier to use and find information.

INCREASE QUALITY AND REACH OF NEWSLETTER. Our newsletter schedule has been haphazard because of the demands of other projects on staff time. In addition to hiring someone fulltime to manage content on our website and for our newsletter, we plan to ask partners to contribute stories and information for our newsletter. Not only will this cut down on the preparation time, it will also strengthen our relationships with our partners and ensure that our newsletter reflects the good work that is going on in local communities across the country. We will also work aggressively, at conferences and other events, to increase the number of subscribers to our newsletter.

Measuring Progress...

- ➲ National media coverage of community schools increases in major news networks
- ➲ Increased coverage in education press includes PEN NewsBlast, ED Week and ED Daily
- ➲ Monthly newsletter readership expanded from 4000 to 8,000 by 2011 and to 12,000 by 2014

Products

- ➲ Strategic communications plan
- ➲ New messaging framework
- ➲ Communications toolkit that includes talking points and positioning statements
- ➲ Enhanced website with virtual tours of community schools

In order to increase the impact of the Coalition and make community schools a mainstream school improvement strategy, we will strengthen our leadership and governance, deepen partner relationships and expand our staffing.

Organizational Capacity

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Throughout our strategic planning process, the Coalition has reflected on lessons gleaned from other national alliances as well as our own experiences. The basic conclusion is that we have an approach that not only works, but it is very cost effective. With a staff of three, and annual budgets of approximately \$500,000, the Coalition and its partners have taken a good idea that had limited traction and catalyzed a national movement.

To move community schools to the next level requires that we strengthen our leadership and governance, and that we expand the staffing capacity of the Coalition.

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE. A Steering Committee has guided the Coalition since its inception, bringing together leaders from three key groups: major community school models; national education organizations; and related disciplines and fields. This group has served us well, but in order to extend our reach we need a more diverse steering committee, one that includes leaders from local system-wide community school initiatives. This strategic plan is built substantially on their capacity and they must be at the decision making table. In addition, more leaders from related school reform arenas such as afterschool, social and emotional learning, service learning, and mental health are needed. A broader-based steering committee will give the Coalition a platform for dialogue about how we can work together more effectively to communicate the connections between our approaches in schools and communities. The expanded Steering Committee members will be in place by January, 2008.

At the same time, we broaden the membership to make the steering committee a vehicle for deeper dialogue and action, we also need a smaller group of committed leaders who will focus on organizational development and sustainability. We are now organizing an Executive Committee – that with the following responsibilities:

- ⦿ Sustain the financial viability of the Coalition
- ⦿ Ensure the accountability of the Coalition to its mission, its partners and the field
- ⦿ Review the Director's performance and plan for succession in the future
- ⦿ Serve as a 'Kitchen Cabinet' offering advice and helping to resolve issues requiring immediate attention.

PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT We have highlighted throughout this plan the importance of our partners in achieving our goal of more, and more effective, community schools. Their importance cannot be over-estimated. Through their participation in Coalition action teams, our partners continue to move the community schools vision forward by helping to move our policy agenda, providing venues for presentations and dialogues and making community schools an explicit part of their own agendas. The expanded staff capacity we seek will enable the Coalition to be more purposeful and intentional in its work with partners.

STAFF EXPANSION. The Coalition has functioned with a staff of three for most of the past decade, augmented by short-term staff and consultants, (Director, Research Director and Program Assistant). We have accomplished much with such a small team. However, to achieve the goals set forth in this strategic plan, we need more staff and consulting support. This strategic plan calls for three more positions: Capacity Building Coordinator, a Policy Analyst and a Communications Coordinator. These individuals will help to implement the strategies in this strategic plan.

EVALUATING OUR PROGRESS In 2011, midway through the implementation of our strategic plan, we will conduct an evaluation to ensure that we are effectively moving towards the results we have set out for ourselves. This evaluation will be conducted by an outside consultant.



COALITION PARTNERS

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT / COMMUNITY BUILDING

Center for Community Change
Development Training Institute
National Community Building Network
National Congress for Community Economic Development
National Council of La Raza
National Neighborhood Coalition
National Trust for Historic Preservation
National Urban League
Police Executive Research Forum
The Harwood Institute

EDUCATION

American Association for Higher Education
American Association of School Administrators
American Federation of Teachers
American School Counselor Association
Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
CASEL (Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning) – U. of Illinois at Chicago
Center for Social and Emotional Education
Council of Chief State School Officers
Council of the Great City Schools
Developmental Studies Center
Learning First Alliance
National Association for Bilingual Education
National Association of Elementary School Principals
National Association of School Psychologists
National Association of Secondary School Principals
National Association of State Boards of Education
National Association of State Directors of Special Education
National Education Association
National PTA
National School Boards Association
Pacific Oaks College, CA

FAMILY SUPPORT/HUMAN SERVICES

Alliance for Children and Families
American Public Human Services Association
Child Welfare League of America
Family Support America
National Center for Children and Families
National Center for Family Literacy
The Educational Alliance
United Way of America

GOVERNMENT

Local and State Government
National League of Cities
National Association of Counties
National Conference of State Legislatures*
National Governors' Association*
US Conference of Mayors

Federal Government

Learn and Serve America
21st Century Learning Centers
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH

American Public Health Association
American School Health Association
Centers for Mental Health Services, UMD
National Assembly on School-Based Health Care
National Mental Health Association
Society of State Directors of Health, Physical Education and Recreation
The Center for Health and Health Care in Schools
UCLA Center for Mental Health in Schools

LOCAL COMMUNITY SCHOOL NETWORKS

Achievement Plus Community Learning Centers, St. Paul, MN
Alliance for Families & Children, Hennepin County, MN
Baltimore Coalition for Community Schools, MD
Bates College/ Lewiston Public Schools, ME
Birmingham Public Schools, AL
Boston Excels, MA
Boston Full Service Schools Roundtable, MA
Bridges to Success, United Way of Central Indiana -Indianapolis, IN
Bridges to the Future, United Way of Genesee County - Flint, MI
Bridges to Success, United Way of Greater Greensboro - Greensboro, NC
Bridges to Success, United Way of Greater High Point - High Point, NC
Chatham-Savannah Youth Futures Authority, GA
Chelsea Community Schools, MA

Chicago Coalition for Community Schools, IL
Chicago Public Schools- The Campaign to Expand Community Schools in Chicago
Community Agencies Corporation of New Jersey
Community College of Aurora/Aurora Public Schools, CO
Community-School Connections, NY
Community Schools Rhode Island, RI
Evansville-Vanderburgh

Corporation School Community Council, IN
Jacksonville Children's Commission, KidsCAN! - Mesa United Way
Lehigh Valley Council for Youth/United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley, Bethlehem, PA
Lincoln Community Learning Centers Initiative, NE
Linkages to Learning, Montgomery County, MD
Local Investment Commission, Kansas City, MO
Minneapolis Beacons Project, MN
New Paradigm Partners, Turtle Lake, New Vision for Public Schools, NY
Port Chester-Rye Union Free School District, NY

Project Success, IL

Rockland 21st Century Collaborative for Children and Youth, NY
School Linked Services, Inc., Kansas City, KS
SCOPE, Central Falls, RI
St. Louis Park Schools, MN
St. Louis Public Schools, Office of Community Education, MO
Schools Uniting Neighborhoods (SUN), Portland, OR
United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania/ First Doors to the Future, Philadelphia, PA
University of Alabama-Birmingham/ Birmingham Public Schools, AL
University of Dayton/ Dayton Public Schools, OH
University of Denver/ Denver Public Schools, CO
University of Kentucky/ Lexington Public Schools, KY
University of New Mexico/ United South Broadway Corp/ Albuquerque Public Schools, NM
University of Rhode Island/ Pawtucket Public Schools, RI
West Philadelphia Improvement Corps (WEPIIC)

NATIONAL COMMUNITY SCHOOL NETWORKS

Beacon Schools Youth Development Institute at the Fund for the City of New York
Children's Aid Society
Collaborative for Integrated School Services,
Harvard Graduate School of Education
Communities in Schools
Center for Community School Partnerships, University of Pennsylvania
National Community Education Association
Schools of the 21st Century, Bush Center-Yale University

POLICY, TRAINING AND ADVOCACY

American Youth Policy Forum
Children's Defense Fund
Cross Cities Campaign for Urban School Reform
Education Development Center
Eureka Communities
Family Friendly Schools, VA
Foundations, Inc.
Institute for Responsive Education
Institute for Social and Education Policy, New York University
National Center for Community Education
National Center for Schools and Communities, Fordham University
Joy Dryfoos, Independent Researcher
National Child Labor Committee
National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education
National Youth Employment Coalition
Parents United for Child Care, Boston, MA
Public Education Network
The Finance Project
RMC Research

The Rural School and Community Trust

PHILANTHROPY
Carnegie Corporation
Charles Stewart Mott Foundation
Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation
KnowledgeWorks Foundation
Milton S. Eisenhower Foundation
Polk Bros. Foundation
Rose Community Foundation
The After School Corporation
Wallace-Reader's Digest Funds

SCHOOL FACILITIES PLANNING
Concordia, LLC
Council of Education Facilities Planners International
National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities
New Schools / Better Neighborhoods
Smart Growth America
21st Century School Fund

STATE ENTITIES

California Department of Education
California Healthy Start Field Office, California
Center for Community-School Partnerships
Child and Family Policy Center, IA
Children First, OH
Community Schools, Rhode Island
Colorado Foundation for Families & Children
Education Leadership Beyond

Excellence Foundation Consortium, CA
Illinois Community School Partnership / Voices for Illinois Children
Nebraska Children and Families Foundation
New Jersey School-Based Youth Services/
Department of Human Services
Office of Family Resource and Youth Services Center, KY
Ohio Department of Education
State Education and Environment Roundtable

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Academy for Educational Development
AED Center for Youth Development and Policy Research
America's Promise
Association of New York State Youth Bureaus
Big Brothers Big Sisters of America
Boys and Girls Clubs of America
California Afterschool Partnership / Center for Collaborative Solutions
Camp Fire USA
Coalition of Community Foundations for Youth
Families of Freedom Scholarship Fund
Forum on Youth Investment
National Collaboration for Youth
National Institute for Out-of-School Time
National School-Age Care Alliance
After school Resource Network
Partnership for After-School Education
YMCA of the USA